

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**

DBB 45956

8P

Copy to: 1 - Immigration and Naturalization Service,
San Diego (REGISTERED MAIL)

Report of: SA HOWARD D. WESLEY **Office:** SAN DIEGO
Date: June 30, 1967

Field Office File #: San Diego 105-6013 **Bureau File #:** 105-147037

Title: ANDRE BELA LOUIS BAK

MICROFILMED
JUL 21 1967
DOC. MICRO. SER.

Character: INTERNAL SECURITY - FRANCE
REGISTRATION ACT - FRANCE

Synopsis

Subject, when interviewed at San Diego on 6/20/67, stated he helped organize the Association of Hungarian Veterans in France in 1949. He said that as an official of this refugee group he had to cooperate with the French police to screen possible Communist infiltrators and to insure recognition of the organization by the French. Also from about 1950 to 1953 BAK assisted the French Military in the selection of volunteers for special intelligence missions to Germany, Austria and Hungary. BAK said he would receive no pay for his cooperation with French intelligence, although he was paid for some translation work which he did. In 1953 BAK terminated all connections with French intelligence; he said that the French wanted him to work strictly for them, whereas he felt he was working for the Hungarian refugee association and that any assistance which he or other officials gave the French was merely a matter of cooperation between the French and the Association of Hungarian Refugees. BAK recalled that ALEXANDER BANHEGYI had engaged in intelligence work for France during this period and was suspected of being a double agent. BAK said that OLIVER LOVAASZ had handled administrative work for French Military Intelligence.

105-6013 - P - 105-147037

DETAILS:

CS COPY

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

FOR COORDINATION WITH

FBI

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE/METHOD/EXEMPTION 3B26
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2008

2

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 6/21/67

ANDRE BELA BAK, also known as Andrew Bela Bak and Andras Bela Bak, appeared voluntarily at the San Diego Office of the FBI for interview. His rights were explained to him, as reflected in the executed waiver form.

He stated that his full name was Andre Bela Bak, but that he sometimes used the English equivalent of Andrew, or the Hungarian, Andras. He stated that he was born in Kolozsvar, Hungary (now part of Rumania) on June 24, 1912. He described himself as blond, thinning hair, blue eyes, 190 lbs., 5'8", employed in the Central Accounting Department, First National Bank (telephone 294-4320, 21, 23), residence 3540 1/2 Georgia Street, San Diego, California.

BAK said that he left Hungary about March 27, 1945, retreating from the advance of the Russian troops on the Eastern Front. At the age of 10 he had entered a military academy where the sons of Hungarian Army officers were trained. His father had been a colonel in the Austro-Hungarian Army. When World War II came on, he was first a captain in the infantry and later was a part of the Hungarian Army General Staff.

He finished Middle School in 1930 and spent from 1930 to 1934 in the military academy. He was made a second lieutenant in 1934 while still in the academy and was a member of the Hungarian Officers Corps from then until 1945.

After the collapse of the Eastern Front, BAK's unit was evacuated to Bavaria in southern Germany, and when the American occupation forces came, he was taken to a prisoner of war camp in France. After his arrival in France, he was very ill with a kidney infection. He had been married in Hungary in September of 1944, and his wife came to France looking for him and found him in the prisoner of war camp. Inasmuch as he was ill and his wife was then residing in France, he was released to the French from the camp and obtained French permission to remain in France. He was in France from October, 1945, until about 1954. He recovered sufficiently to begin working about June, 1946, working

2

On 6/19/67 at San Diego, California File # San Diego 105-6013

by SA HOWARD D. WESLEY/kib Date dictated 6/20/67

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

20

SD 105-6013

odd jobs, making decorations, lamp shades, etc. For a while he worked for a cartoon company, because of his ability in drawing. In 1947 he obtained a job as an industrial draftsman with a small company, which job lasted about six months. Up until 1954 he had various odd jobs in his effort to make a living, but depended largely upon his wife's income. He left France and went to Morocco in 1954, where he worked as a land surveyor at Casa Blanca in connection with the construction of American bases there. He was in Morocco from June, 1954, to about February, 1955. He then joined the American Corps of Engineering, Mediterranean District, in about February, 1955, where he worked until about March of 1959. In 1959 his engineering outfit was going to Italy because they had finished their job in North Africa; however, inasmuch as BAK was not at the time a naturalized French citizen and Italy did not welcome Hungarian refugees, he remained in Morocco and was employed by an American company which was financed by French and Dutch money and which was working on irrigation projects in North Africa.

BAK came to the United States in 1962, entering on September 9, 1962 at New York City. He went to Newark, New Jersey immediately, where he had friends, and obtained work there with the Porter-O'Brien... Construction Firm, where he remained until May, 1963. Inasmuch as he did not like the climate in New Jersey, he asked for a job with the same company in Los Angeles. In June, 1963, he decided to come to San Diego, since he did not like Los Angeles. In San Diego, he obtained work first with Frank Hope and Company, an architectural firm. In January, 1964, he was laid off by this company because of lack of work. He said that he had a hard time obtaining and holding jobs because his English was so poor. He said that among the employments he had in San Diego was one with the Sadler Bennett and Company. He decided to go to school and learn how to operate computers and started studying this job training in February of 1965, and obtained a job with the First National Bank at San Diego in February, 1966, where he is still employed.

With regard to his political activities, BAK stated that when he was in Paris in 1948, he was introduced to OTTO HAPSBURG (pretender to the throne of Austria and Hungary) during the time of the Berlin blockade by the

C 3

SD 105-6013

Russians. The pretender had plans to prepare a place in the Pyrenees Mountains in Spain for the safety of Hungarian refugees in the event the Russian armies came farther west in Germany and Austria. BAK helped draw plans for OTTO HAPSBURG and spent some time explaining to him and his group the organization methods or system of the Hungarian Army, so that they would know when they spoke to military people involved in the preparation of the refugee center in Spain. Inasmuch as the German blockade failed, this plan was never developed further.

At about this time, he had some reports by correspondence and through personal contacts that old friends in Austria and Germany were trying to organize a Hungarian refugee organization for their mutual security and protection. He stated that he began corresponding with these contacts in order to help solidify the various groups in the different countries. This was what brought about his efforts to help organize the Association of Hungarian Veterans in France which was organized in 1949. He said he obtained the permission of the French Government to organize this association, and later on it was officially recognized by the French authorities in 1952. He said that the association was very successful. He said that in order to operate, he and other leaders of the refugee association had to cooperate with the French Police in Hungarian refugee matters. He said that the French Police were always asking him if he knew certain Hungarian refugees and what he knew about them, and that he had to be cooperative. He said that one of the prime purposes of the Association of Hungarian Veterans in France was to defend themselves against communist infiltrators who would betray them to the communist regime in Hungary.

He stated that he was later asked by the Polish refugees, who were establishing refugee organizations in the various countries of Europe, to help organize the Central and Eastern Europe Veterans Federation. He said he became president of the federation group in France.

BAK said that from about 1950 until about March, 1953, he did some translation work for the French military. He also, in connection with the anticommunist work of the

4

SD 150-6013

Hungarian refugee group, helped the French National Police in screening suspect refugees. He also stated that about the end of 1950 representatives of a special service group of the French Army came to him and asked him to recommend and check some volunteers for special missions to other countries, mostly to Germany, Austria, and Hungary. He stated that he did not know too much about the assignments that the French were making to these volunteers, but that they consisted principally, in his opinion, of messenger service between the various Hungarian underground groups. He stated that, in all, he probably recommended twelve or fifteen individuals to the French intelligence services. He stated that he recommended some individuals as translators and administrators and some to be messengers. He stated that he did not know specifically the nature of each appointment, but that in order for him to recommend, the French did give him an idea as to the assignment each man was to be given. Regarding the results of this endeavor by the French, BAK said that he heard that two of the messengers were captured by the Hungarians. Later he heard that one of these two had been released or had escaped and returned to the West. He stated that he knew of five of these messengers who had returned to France. One of these individuals appeared to be very indiscreet and was suspected of having become a double agent for the Hungarians. He was dropped by the French service and afterwards caused BAK and others much trouble by boasting of his exploits in the intelligence underground. BAK said that he heard also of another one of the men he had recommended who returned to Germany from Hungary and that he admitted the Hungarians had sent him back as a double agent.

BAK said that all of the Hungarian Veterans Associations and their individual members in the various countries of Europe had been cooperating in intelligence matters and had also been banded together for cultural and protective purposes. He said that before he accepted the offer of collaboration with the French military, the French had been asked for a declaration to the effect that the Association of Hungarian Veterans of France was to be considered as an independent national organization of Hungarians and not as French agents. BAK said that before he and other leaders of the Association of Hungarian Veterans did any work in cooperation with French intelligence, they asked the

SD 105-6013

permission of the Hungarian organization. BAK also pointed out that when this collaboration stopped in about 1954, he insisted on sending all records of his work with French intelligence to the Central Committee of the Association of Hungarian Veterans, so that they could review his accounting of all funds paid to him by the French and/or others and the purposes for which this money was used. He stated that he had receipts to account for every bit of money which he had handled. He said that his recommendations of Hungarian individuals for messenger work with the French were gratis. He said that he, himself, received a small salary, for which he accounted, and he was paid for translation work which he performed. Also for a while he lived in a small apartment for which the French paid. BAK explained that about the end of 1950 he had been living in a hotel. The French complained that it was a poor place to receive confidential telephone calls, etc., so the French Army Intelligence had him move to a small apartment of an old couple, where he could more discreetly carry on his activities. He said that they paid for this apartment during the time that he used it. He stated that he personally was not acquainted with the French intelligence operators, inasmuch as he had only a telephone number to call and make contacts, and he never personally knew the persons he contacted.

He said that in 1953 the Special Service of the French Army, for which he presumed he was working, had concluded that the Association of Hungarian Veterans of France work strictly for the French and be separated from other refugee Hungarian groups in other countries. He stated that he did not like this because his loyalty was to the Hungarian refugee groups, and this violated the first agreement which he had had with them, and which was to the effect that he was working for the Association of Hungarian Veterans and that any assistance given the French was cooperation or collaboration between the Hungarian Association and the French, and not between the French and individuals. Because of this new demand by the French, he severed all relations with the French Army representatives. He said that he still continued to cooperate with the French Federal Police and local police, inasmuch as this was necessary in order to be able to carry on the defense and assistance program for himself and the other Hungarian refugees.

SD 105-6013

BAK stated that in his work in collecting intelligence for the Association of Hungarian Veterans of France, he built up a card index file of considerable size on Hungarians and others who were suspected of being dangerous to the safety of the Hungarian refugees. He stated that these individuals were counterchecked by other Hungarian organizations in other countries. He also stated that he had hired other members of the Association of Hungarian Veterans to clip Hungarian newspapers for items of interest to intelligence. He stated that this information was exchanged with other Hungarian veterans organizations in other countries, and whenever a new Hungarian was arriving in France, the French Police would ask him for background information on the individual. The police were never charged anything for any information furnished them by the Association of Hungarian Veterans, and any payments by the French military were all receipted.

DFOB
CIT HUNGARY
OCC

BAK stated that when he was in anticommunist defense work for the Association of Hungarian Veterans in France, he had known DEZSO I. BENYO. He stated that this individual was not trusted and had been proven unreliable on various occasions. *Handwritten: Hungarian refugees in France, 1950's*

Handwritten: A CONTACT OF SUBJECT OF

BAK said he did not recall ever having known LOUIS V. RAJAGH or PAULA SAROSI.

DFOB
CIT HUNGARY
OCC
Handwritten: FRANCE PARIS

BAK did recall ALEXANDER BANHEGYI, and stated that this was one of the individuals that he had recommended for the Messenger Service instituted by the French military intelligence, and that upon this man's return from Hungary, he was the one who had been suspected of becoming a double agent for the Hungarians. He was dropped by the French because of this suspicion and subsequently made considerable trouble for BAK and others of the Association of Hungarian Veterans. BAK said that this man was very indiscreet in boasting about his exploits in the Hungarian underground, and that he had also personally attacked BAK and other Hungarian refugees in France by issuing pamphlets and otherwise. BAK stated that the last he had heard of this individual he had left France for Germany.

DFOB
CIT HUNGARY
OCC
Handwritten: FRANCE PARIS

BAK said that OLIVER LOVAASZ was a former major in the Hungarian Army and an old friend of BAK's from Hungary. He stated that he had recommended this individual to the

DBB 85950

1

SD 105-6013

French intelligence service for administrative work. He said he now believed that this individual was somewhere in the United States.

BAK stated that he had no knowledge of the Registration Act and was not aware that he might be required to register because of his intelligence work for the Association of Hungarian Veterans of France.

It was also noted that BAK has a poor comprehension of the English language, and at times it was almost impossible to understand him.

- 8* -